

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

September 29, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In April, we along with nearly 80 other members of Congress urged Secretary Blinken to designate Vladimir Kara-Murza as “unlawfully or wrongfully detained” in a [bipartisan, bicameral letter](#). In light of his recent disappearance during a transfer from a detention center in Russia, we as members of the Virginia congressional delegation now urge you to support this designation under the Levinson Act (22 U.S.C. 1741 et seq.) and to direct the State Department to immediately engage with the Russian government in order to secure his release. With Vladimir’s health deteriorating after more than a year in prison and with the alarming news of his disappearance, urgent action is needed to protect his life and to return him to his family in Virginia.

A 42-year-old historian, journalist, and champion of democracy and human rights, Vladimir, a U.S. lawful permanent resident, has been detained since April 2022 for his fervent public criticism of the Putin regime and its illegal invasion of Ukraine. He was charged with treason, spreading “false information” about the military, and working with an “undesirable” civil society organization. In reality, Vladimir was arrested merely for speaking truth about Russian atrocities in Ukraine, and about corruption and abuses being committed in Russia under Putin’s regime. In April 2023, he was sentenced to 25 years to be served in a strict and remote penal colony. The conditions during his pretrial detention – including denial of adequate medical care – have already caused him to lose more than 40 pounds of body weight, and experience a loss of feeling in his extremities, a result of the lasting nerve damage caused by Russian government agents’ apparent attempts to poison him in 2015 and 2017. Without release and adequate medical care, his prognosis is grim.

Throughout his unjust detention, we appreciate that your administration has [recognized](#) Vladimir as a political prisoner and [imposed](#) targeted sanctions on those involved in his arbitrary detention. These sanctions authorities exist in part because of Vladimir’s advocacy for the Magnitsky Act and subsequent legislation, which have also been adopted by the European Union, Canada, and the United Kingdom to target human rights abusers and corrupt actors in Russia.

While your administration’s actions have helped maintain public attention on his case, we implore you to now take the next step and support designating Vladimir Kara-Murza as an “unlawfully or wrongfully detained” U.S. national, as defined under U.S. law and in your Executive Order 14078. Supporting this designation is equally important to demonstrating the U.S. government’s recognition of Vladimir’s long history of forcefully advocating for a free and democratic Russia. We continue to support your efforts to secure the release of other Americans detained unjustly in Russia; we simply ask that Vladimir be added to the list of U.S. nationals whom the United States recognizes as wrongfully detained and is willing to include in discussions around prisoner releases.

Vladimir has risked his life to fight for the highest ideals of our country and our Commonwealth – for democracy, the respect for human rights and the rule of law, justice and accountability, and the triumph of freedom over tyranny. His life’s work dedicated to this last value – reflected in our own state motto, *Sic semper tyrannis* – makes us immensely proud to call Vladimir our constituent and to stand with him at this dangerous time while he faces the wrath of a murderous tyrant. We urge you to support his designation and ensure our constituent knows that we share in his hope that he will return to his wife, his children, and his home as a free man.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress



Tim Kaine  
Member of Congress